

TURKEY CUSTOMS

Greetings:

When greeting friends or strangers, one shakes hands and says *Nasılsınız?* (How are you?) or *Merhaba* (Hello). A typical response to *Nasılsınız* is *İyiyim, teşekkür ederim* (Fine, thank you).

The hands of an older person may be kissed and touched to the greeter's forehead to show respect. Young people often greet each other with *Selam* (Salute).

When parting, people say *Hoscakal* (Stay well), *Gorusuruz* (See you later), *Kendine iyi bak* (Take care), or even *Bye-bye*.

Upon joining a small group, one greets each person individually. Otherwise, the title *Hanım* is used for women and *Bey* for men among peers or with younger persons. These follow the given name: *Leyla Hanım* or *Ismail Bey*. In informal situations, one addresses older people with *Abla* for women (*Fatma Abla*) or *Abi* for men (*Ahmet Abi*). These terms mean “big sister” and “big brother” respectively. When greeting someone much older, one uses *Teyze* (Aunt) and *Amca* (Uncle) after the first name.

Gestures:

Turkish people generally use their hands a great deal during conversation, forming gestures that add meaning and emphasis.

Social courtesies are valued in Turkey.

One does not put feet on a desk or table, point the sole of the foot toward another person, smoke without asking permission, or cross the legs while in the presence of an older or superior person.

“No” can be expressed by either shaking the head or lifting it upward quickly.

Holidays:

The ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar is *Ramadan*

People celebrate the end of *Ramadan* by eating sweets during the three days of *Şeker Bayramı* (sugar holiday). Another Muslim holiday is *Kurban Bayramı* (sacrifice holiday), which marks the season of pilgrimage to Makkah and commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son.

Other official holidays include New Year's Day, National Sovereignty Day and Children's Day (23 Apr.), Youth and Sports Day (19 May), Victory Day (30 Aug.), Republic Day (29 Oct.), and Anniversary of Atatürk's Death (10 Nov.).